



Public Meeting Summary

Plan/Project: 14th St. Corridor Vision and Revitalization Strategy Final Public Meeting

Meeting Date and Time: May 21, 2011 10:00am – 1:00pm

Location: Powell Elementary School, 1350 Upshur St. NW 20011

DC Government Attendees: Geraldine Gardner (Associate Director, Neighborhood Planning), Judi Gold (Director of Constituent Services, Office of Councilmember Bowser), Tarek Bolden (Ward 1 Neighborhood Planner), Gizachew Andargeh (Project Manager)

AGENDA:

Open House

10:00am – 1:00pm

SUMMARY:

OP held the final public meeting for the 14th Street Revitalization Strategy. The open house format allowed for participants to review the input that OP and the consultants heard from the public, business community and the advisory committee before reading through the goals and recommendations.

Corridor Wide

What we heard from the...

Public

- Need for traffic calming and streetscape improvements along the entire corridor
- Bus barn is environmental hazard (carbon monoxide) and doesn't contribute to the neighborhood
- Lack of aesthetic cohesiveness
- Litter primarily between Spring and Shepherd
- No street furniture

- safe + clean, e.g. lighting oriented to pedestrians
- improve lighting
- split benches
- arts uses + murals

Businesses

- alley clean-ups
- Infrastructure improvement, lighting/pavement/signage
- DDOT needs to be involved
- parking problems with WMATA employees

Corridor Wide

GOAL: Improve the public realm and strengthen the corridor’s connectivity to key attractions in the area.

Recommendation #1

Work with DDOT to schedule a 14th St. streetscape and stormwater improvement plan that includes:

- a) extending Columbia Heights streetscape characteristics to Node 1,
- b) analyzing the feasibility of reopening Decatur St. between 14th St. and Iowa Ave. at Node 2, and
- c) designing the reconfiguration of the island “porkchop” at the intersections of 14th St. Colorado Ave. and Kennedy St. at Node 3.

Next Steps

Work with community stakeholders to understand streetscape and stormwater issues and assist DDOT with the scope of the study.

Recommendation #2

Enhance environmental stewardship along corridor by improving tree canopy, landscape and stormwater management via the 14th St. streetscape and stormwater study.

Next Steps

Encourage civic organizations and business associations to adopt watering of street trees, specifically in the commercial nodes, utilizing DDOT’s Tree Watering Program.

Recommendations #3

Initiate short term improvements to create a more appealing and safer pedestrian experience for residents and visitors by coordinating public realm investments with private investments.

Next Steps

A) In collaborations with DDOT engage ANC and community organizations to address safety issues at Emerson St. and 14th St.

B) Work with DDOT to have lights posts painted black; Conduct an illumination study to ensure globes are translucent and bright and, if necessary, trim tree canopy to allow more light on the street.

C) Encourage community to take part in the "Call for Projects" where they can advocate for specific projects to be a part of DDOT's Capital Projects list.

Recommendation #4

Work with Cultural Tourism DC and DDOT to design and install interpretive signs at each of the commercial nodes reflecting the history and culture of 14th Street. Consider translating signs into Spanish and Amharic.

Next Steps

Identify specific locations where public art can be used to reflect the historic charm of the corridor.

Recommendation #5

Improve and maintain appearance of underutilized commercial and residential properties.

Next Steps

A) Organize two "Operation Fix-its" with the Mayor's Office to improve property appearance.

B) Work to identify a property owner of a strategic location within each commercial node for eligibility in the Rapid Response Program.

Recommendation #6

Take advantage of Advisory Neighborhood Commission grants for public space/aesthetic improvement projects.

Next Steps

Local non-profits to apply for one ANC 4C or 4A grant within one year of Plan adoption

NODE 1: Spring Rd. – Shepherd St.

What we heard from the...

Public

- increase development opportunities to add more space
- Redevelop C&K Hotel

- Use sidewalk cafes and encourage carryout restaurants expand customer base.
- shared branding + marketing using local business associations
- improve Upshur Park to make it an asset, not a barrier (activities, farmer's market)
- safe + clean, e.g. lighting oriented to pedestrians
- increased transit, e.g. streetcar and bikeshare
- Twin Oaks Community Garden – activate it, sell goods at farmer's market
- Nodes should reflect the surrounding community
- food options and variety should be made better
- needs events to bring people out
- need to clean up the loitering, drunkenness

Market Study

- customer trade area for Node 1 is a component of the Columbia Heights' secondary trade area.
- Node 3 has limited retail potential and should be repositioned into largely non-retail uses on the ground-level
- can support additional General, Apparel, Furnishings, and Other (GAFO) businesses, especially neighborhood-oriented boutique stores that are “priced-out” of Columbia Heights.

NODE 1 : Spring Rd. – Shepherd St.

GOAL: Aesthetically reposition Node 1 to benefit from Columbia Heights' momentum.

Recommendation #1

Recognizing the success of the prioritization and implementation of Retail Action Strategy (RAS) recommendations in Phase 1, stakeholders should revisit the RAS and identify priority recommendations that will support retail expansion, retention, and attraction.

Next Steps

Reconvene Ward 4 stakeholders with Ward 1 stakeholders to prioritize and implement recommendations RAS recommendations.

Recommendation #2

As part of the larger 14th St. streetscape and stormwater study, assess public realm and urban design elements from Columbia Heights that can be mirrored in this node including curb extensions, tree plantings. Mirrored design elements should be focused at the gateway intersection of Spring Rd. and 14th St. NW

Next Steps

Work with community stakeholders to understand streetscape and stormwater issues and assist DDOT with the scope of the study.

Node 2: Webster St. – Decatur St.

What we heard from the...

Public

- Large grocery store (big draw)
- local pharmacy
- no big box, but underground parking
- smaller gym
- garden center
- Eastern Market like area (kiosk type retail)
- arts + creative retail
- gallery, museum, e.g. “Bethesda Row”
- Involve the local institutions
- improve lighting
- split benches
- increase density for mixed use
- arts uses + murals
- more, bigger cafes, ice cream/cake shops

Market Study

- surrounding neighborhood’s preference for a small grocery store is reflected by their household expenditures
- Node 2 has the potential to support a small grocery store or large convenience store, with appropriate accessibility, visibility and parking

Node 2: Webster St. – Decatur St.

GOAL: Bolster opportunity to be a true neighborhood-serving retail area and improve the appearance of the public realm.

Recommendation #1

Change the Comprehensive Plan land use designation to mixed use moderate density residential/low density commercial for the C-1 and C-M-1 zones.

Next Steps

- A) OP to incorporate land use designation in next Comprehensive Plan amendment process.
- B) In collaboration with property owners OP will initiate a zoning change consistent with the amended Comprehensive Plan.

Recommendation #2

Target quick wins via public realm improvements at strategic locations in order to support new development and improve the appearance of the node.

Next Steps

Identify and design specific improvements (beautification, public art, murals) for the triangular lot at 14th and Webster St., the south facing wall of Andromeda Health Clinic, and the exterior wall of Uptown Wine & Spirits.

Recommendation #3

Through a 14th St. streetscape and stormwater study, look at the feasibility of opening up Decatur St. between 14th St. and Iowa Ave.

Next Steps

Work with community stakeholders to understand streetscape and stormwater issues and assist DDOT with the scope of the study.

Node 3: Jefferson St. - Longfellow St.

What we heard from the....

Public

- need for an “anchor” use that could sustain a strong interest among local residents
- anchor uses should be Food and Beverage types of uses, including a sit down restaurant (e.g. Colorado Kitchen or Tryst), specialty grocer or an entertainment use like Twins Jazz.
- support alternative modes of transportation including Capital Bikeshare, bike racks

Market Analysis

- Although calculations suggest that a small amount of food & beverage and GAFO demand remains for this area, the modest amount of total retail demand generated indicates that Node 3 is an ideal candidate for a niche market such as a *Creative Arts Cluster*
- Node 3 has limited retail potential and should be repositioned into largely non-retail uses on the ground-level

Node 3: Jefferson St. - Longfellow St.

GOAL: Reposition Node 3 to attract creative arts uses and daytime uses (non-retail) to become a thriving, and unique commercial area.

Recommendation #1

Attract new arts and non-retail uses to the node by promoting the corridor and building on existing diverse cultural assets.

Next Steps

- A) Include Node 3's vacant retail spaces in the DC Creative Retail Space Bank to advertise availability.
- B) Hold a District wide Creative Economy event in Node 3.

Recommendation #2

Through a 14th St. streetscape and stormwater study, look at the feasibility of reconfiguring the "porkchop" at 14th St., Colorado Ave., and Kennedy St. to create more public space.

Next Steps

Work with community stakeholders to understand streetscape and stormwater issues and assist DDOT with the scope of the study.

Community Partnering

GOAL #1: Determine key areas to leverage and engage community stakeholders during the Plan's implementation phase.

Recommendation #1

Establish a taskforce to assess and prioritize key Plan recommendations and participate in kick off action as appropriate.

Next Steps

- A) OP to invite and host initial meeting with active stakeholders within 4 months of Plan adoption.

Recommendation #2

Determine a community partner, i.e. non-profit, to ensure and/or lead application process for applicable local and national grant programs that implement plan recommendations.

Next Steps

- A) Identify all applicable non-profits operating in the planning area within 6 months of Plan adoption.

Transit & Transportation

GOAL #1: Improve multi-modal access along the corridor.

Recommendation #1

Add Capital Bikeshare Station at 14th St. and Longfellow St.

Next Steps

- A) OP will recommend the 14th St. and Longfellow St. location during DDOT's next round of installations.

Recommendation #2

Collaborate with DDOT to install updated parking kiosks along the corridor.

Next Steps

- A) OP to recommend to DDOT that new parking kiosks be installed at Nodes 1 & 2

Recommendation #3

Increase carsharing options along the corridor and/or on underutilized parking lots to increase foot traffic and exposure.

Next Steps

- A) Identify three possible off-street locations to recommend to Zipcar DC

Recommendation #4

Expand Circulator Bus north along 14th St.

Business Strategy

What we heard from the businesses

- Location of the corridor; building character
- Business owners are energized, but perhaps not trained for specific business needs
- Wide sidewalks
- Good relationships between owners and community
- Better relationship between government and owners (specific 14th St needs)
- Government should initiate dialogue with businesses
- Collective, unique, and creative advertising/marketing (funding needed)
- Increase walking traffic
- More uniform storefronts (signage clutter)
- Infrastructure improvement, lighting, painting, signage
- Increased foot traffic
- Anchor attractions(s)
- top difficulties include clean and safety issues and parking
- regarding streetscape improvements, businesses wanted more lighting
- businesses requested assistance in storefront improvements and advertising
- businesses wanted to see more neighborhood serving office (e.g. medical offices)

Business Strategy

GOAL #1: Strengthen opportunities for existing and new small businesses along the corridor

Recommendation #1

Provide ongoing technical assistance for small businesses on how to increase revenue and improve appearance.

Next Steps

A) Business associations organize three information seminars with DC agencies that pass on information on existing programs and eligibility.

B) Create a 14th Street 'Handbook' for existing businesses as an easy-to-understand resource for key concerns in the business community. Translate into multiple languages as appropriate.

Recommendation #2

Encourage key retailers to improve marketing of unique uses and goods.

Next Steps

A) Host a seminar with local businesses on using social media as an advertising tool.

B) Business associations will sponsor a SCORE symposium that will assist small businesses on how to reposition and improve business opportunities.

Recommendation #3

Work with businesses to assist them in receiving a Clean Hands Certificate so they are eligible for small business assistance programs.

Next Steps

A) Create an inventory of businesses who want to obtain a Clean Hands Certificate within one year of Plan adoption.

B) Organize two annual information seminars with DSLBD and OTR to explain the benefits and provide assistance to business who want to have a Clean Hands Certificate.

Recommendation #4

Raise funds for commercial revitalization activities by applying for District and federal grant opportunities and hosting community events.

Next Steps

A) Local non-profits apply for Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF) grants and other discretionary grant funds to implement key recommendations of this Plan.

B) Local community associations or business associations to host one community fundraising event

GOAL #2: Enhance marketing and advertising to increase neighborhood patronage.

Recommendation #1

Encourage property and business owners in the 14th St. planning area to participate in a coordinated branding and marketing initiative.

Next Steps

Develop a neighborhood branding strategy for Nodes 2 and 3 in consultation with a professional consulting firm.

Recommendation #2

Host community events to attract residents to patronize existing and future businesses.

Next Steps

Business associations to organize at least one annual community social events for each node, i.e. jazz band, fashion show, arts walk, restaurant tasting, etc.

As an open house there was no formal presentation, but participants were given five dots to place next to those recommendations they thought should be priorities. This public prioritization will be referred to when the 14th St. Revitalization Strategy Taskforce is created within 4 months of Council passing the Plan. The Taskforce, in cooperation with relevant DC agencies, will be tasked with implementing those prioritized recommendations. Initial results from the dot exercise showed a strong preference for the following recommendations:

- 1) Work with DDOT to schedule a 14th St. streetscape and stormwater improvement plan that includes:
 - a) extending Columbia Heights streetscape characteristics to Node 1,
 - b) analyzing the feasibility of reopening Decatur St. between 14th St. and Iowa Ave. at Node 2, and
 - c) designing the reconfiguration of the island “porkchop” at the intersections of 14th St. Colorado Ave. and Kennedy St. at Node 3.
- 2) Change the Comprehensive Plan land use designation to mixed use moderate density residential/low density commercial for the C-1 and C-M-1 zones.
- 3) Determine a community partner, i.e. non-profit, to ensure and/or lead application process for applicable local and national grant programs that implement plan recommendations.
- 4) Expand Circulator Bus north along 14th St.

5) Provide ongoing technical assistance for small businesses on how to increase revenue and improve appearance.

Those residents who were unable to attend the open house may view them on our website www.planning.dc.gov and take the online survey prioritizing their top recommendations. The Office of Planning is currently translating the goals and recommendations in to Spanish and Amharic and will post them on our website once they are complete. If you have any questions regarding translation, please feel free to contact Gizachew Andargeh at (202) 442-7600.

NEXT STEPS

OP will review the responses from the dot exercise and the online survey. OP will also be working on drafting the final plan over the summer months in preparation for public distribution and comment by September 2011. This will be an opportunity for the public to review the full draft document before the Plan is submitted to Council

For more information about the 14th St. Corridor Vision and Revitalization Strategy please contact either Malaika Abernathy or Gizachew Andargeh at (202) 442-7600.

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: 11

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